

Digital Badges—Validating Achievement of Workplace Readiness Skills for the Commonwealth

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in cooperation with the Career and Technical Education Consortium of States—C-TECS

(00:00) The Digital Badges--Validating Achievement of Workplace Readiness Skills for the Commonwealth credentials video training session is provided by the Virginia Department of Education in cooperation with the Career and Technical Education Consortium of States, C-TECS. I'm Darren Morris, Instructional Designer for C-TECS. This presentation will cover the following topics: defining digital badges and why they are important; how to encourage students to claim their digital badge; and demonstrating the student process for claiming the C-TECS digital badge.

(00:47) So what are digital badges? Today's badges are really digital credentials that represents skills and interests and achievements earned by an individual through specific projects, programs, courses and other activities. What that means is it's very much like a transcript but whereas transcripts offer me only a great look at a complete program or course, badges allow you to get down on the micro level and really talk about what a student has done, what they have excelled in through their educational experience, and offers accessibility and portability in a way that the transcript really can't do, or the degree that's hanging on your wall just cannot do. So there is a learning ecosystem also behind the badges that make them powerful and connected credentials. There's an infrastructure built for us and built for the students so they don't need programming instructions in order to share their badges with others. Now within this ecosystem, it is made up of issuers which are people like us, C-TECS, who have an interest in adding value to the students educational experience. You have badge earners who are the students themselves. In this case, anyone who passes the Workplace Readiness Skills assessment with a 75% or higher has the option of getting the digital badge. Once they get that digital badge, they can then share it with consumers. Consumers are anyone that the digital badge is shared with and hopefully they click on the badge, open it up, and are exposed to the evidence behind it.

(02:35) So why are digital badges so valuable. Number One: We see digital badging as an emerging trend in education. If they aren't doing it now, they will be doing it for the rest of their educational lives. Number Two: We think it's perfect for Career and Technical Education students because CTE is all about competency-based education. When a student achieves the competency, they are confident and they can move forward. Why not go out and publish or publicize their completion of these different components. When students begin to gather a number of digital badges, they start to indicate career pathways which we think is very helpful for post-secondary educators and employers. Plus the students, I think more importantly, can share their digital badges anytime they want and with whomever they want. We think this puts the power and control of their own educational experience in the hands of the students.

(03:48) So what do we mean by evidence of the digital badge? When the digital badge is shared, an employer or post-secondary educator for that matter, may click on it and take a look at it. What it does is it provides, in the case of Workplace Readiness Skills, the actual skills list so they can see those 21 skills. They know what they are then, and they can even see the research behind the skills list and the reasons it was created. It also provides evidence of who actually endorses the experience; meaning in this case, Virginia Department of Education. But, on our Workplace Readiness Skills assessment digital badge, we also have Idaho and Main and Nevada. Because they are states that also use the Workplace Readiness Skills. Further, the digital badge is personalized and has the students' name and date on which the badge is earned. As always, the digital badge system offers free storage and sharing and again it's completely controlled by the student user.

(05:06) So this slide gives you a few examples of how digital badges are actually currently in use. The first bullet is about Buzzmath, which actually breaks the standard for academic achievement in mathematics on the secondary level

into different components so that teachers can better track them, and students are better aware of them. The 4-H has the next bullet and robotics is a program that's easily broken down into components. These are just examples from formal education how digital badges are actually used there, but you can see you know anywhere from the physics involved, to electricity and wiring, to motion. Any number of things that you can break robotics into and actually show where students are more quick or have more expertise in the area of Robotics. Then the next one is the National Museum of Natural History, the Smithsonian Learning Times where the museum has started to engage with otherwise passive visitors to give them an experience that they can actually chart and document and be aware of. An interesting thing about this and other programs is that when the passive visitor is given a chance to prove their skills in the form of a digital badge, they actually do it. They actually complete that and they are incentivized, and this is the case with all digital badges. They are incentivized to get more digital badges and this is a good idea for lifelong learning.

(06:57) Also the last one is about badges for vets and it really is about closing the gap between vets and how they prove their experience, their professional experience, to their time in the service to HR departments. In 2014-15, C-TECS began offering the Workplace Readiness Skills assessment digital badge to any student who requested it optionally on the test. To any student also to do that, they would have had to have a 75% or better score. The badge itself offers any number of pieces of information. It is operated through Credly, our online partner, who is a digital badge provider and it can be shared and stacked with other badges that the student has or will earn.

(08:04) So why should teachers encourage students to claim digital badges? The digital batch project promises to become a standard part of students' continuing education. We know that it has a lot to do with life-long learning. Life-long learning is actually a skill in the Workplace Readiness Skills list so we very much believe in it. In fact if they haven't gotten a digital badge to date, this may be their first one and it will be the first of many, so we think, why not start now and give your student a head start on badges that they're going to encounter in the workplace or to get a job. A student's participation really depends upon you. A student is not going to get a digital badge unless they are informed and educated about why it's interesting to do so, why it's a good thing to do so, and really just about the process, which this presentation includes. Participation in the ecosystem helps build the ecosystem, so the more the merrier in that case. Digital badges also have a way of increasing portability, accessibility, and improvability of students' true educational experience.

(09:27) So what are the advantages of the digital badges to the larger community. For one, teachers and schools actually benefit through programming efforts, especially with stackable badges that can actually affect programming decisions in the future. It can also help with the visibility of credentialing efforts. For students, they just want to prove their skills and they want to be able to have the control over their educational experience. For employers, they're really interested in using digital badges to identify potential employees. C-TECS depends on test site administrators to spread the word about the Workplace Readiness Skills and the Workplace Readiness Skills assessment and the digital badge. It is important for you first to educate yourselves so that you may educate and inform your students and parents about the digital badges. Resources are available through our website at CTECS.org. Go through our website [CTECS.org/services/digitalbadgeproject](https://www.ctecs.org/services/digitalbadgeproject) to find more. Please contact me if you have any questions at all. If this presentation has not yet convinced you of the advantages of digital badges, I urge you to see two additional resources posted on our website. They are both short videos and they both talk about the digital badges, what they are, their advantages, and most importantly, how they're being viewed by other professionals.

(11:08) At this point, I would like to change the presentation into a demonstration of what the student will see if he or she decides to go ahead and claim and share their digital badge. So at the end of the WRS test, students are given the option for requesting a digital badge. It comes on as a window at the end of the testing process only if they score 75% or better. They can enter their email there and request the digital badge. If requested, students receive an email from Credly telling them how to claim their badge, so further instructions are given to them through email. The student must register and confirm registration and Credly, and I think this is a very important aspect to understand, Credly is our provider and a student must register using the same email they entered on their initial request. That's what identifies the student as having received or as being entitled to receive the digital badge. Once identity is confirmed through registration, students may claim their badge, store it and share it. So this is the sample window that the students will receive if they successfully complete the test. Meaning they passed the online exam. A couple of things to

point out here, we recommend that they include an alert to credly.com to their safe sender list just to ensure that the communication goes through. This communication would include instructions on how to claim the badge online, how to store it and how to share it. The student then, if they choose to request the badge, must enter their personal professional email into the box in the middle of the screen, and then hit the button for request badge. If they do not wish to receive the badge they simply hit the button decline badge. I just wanted to point out that this is an optional experience.

(13:24) So this is an example of the email response that Credly provides to the students who request the digital badge. You can see most importantly under the logo here on this email for the digital badge, you see "Save and Share." That's an active link and the students will click on that and then go online to Credly to register their account. Once students arrive on the Credly site they should click on "Not a member yet, sign up now." This begins their registration process. So here we are at the Credly site, where the students will go after they click that button in the corresponding email. Here's the URL up here. They will be on the "Create Account" page in which they will enter the same email that they used to request the badge initially. They will enter their first name and last name again, as it appeared on their test ticket for Ecess, then they will enter a new password and another password that's of their choosing. They have to make sure this button is selected, an individual not an organization. And then they just have to agree to Credly's terms of service and privacy policy. They have to click on both of those and read through those. We think these things are very important and we think you will see that Credly is a trusted resource for us and a trusted partner. Then they just need to click "Sign up now."

(15:16) So once a student registers the account, they will be sent another email from Credly just to verify so they need to get back to Credly just to ensure that the email they entered is the same as the one they used to request the initial badge. So now once they click on that through the email, they will be registered on the site, they will use their login to go into their own site within Credly and this is an example of that page. So I'm using my demo account here just to show it off and it defaults then after they claim the badge, I've already claimed this badge, but students will have a message waiting for them for the first time they go in saying "You have a badge you can claim that's available to be claimed" and just click here, claims it then stores it, then accepts it and this is the badge right here. I've actually accepted them another just issued by Credly, but in this account a couple of things to notice here. You can change your profile, you can add a picture, I added this picture up here, and you can change your account setting. The account settings allow you to do any number of things and it's basically like any online social networking account in a sense. One of the key things to do just buy rolling over here is to manage your badge, meaning you can show it or hide it to anyone or everyone or no one; you can trash it, but if you delete it, it will not come back and you'll have to get a reissue. Students who have done this will have not requested the badge and wish the badge to be sent to them, can actually request it through the test site administrator not directly through C-TECS, but actually through the test site administrator and collect that, verify that, and then issue it directly to the student.

(17:22) Also they can go into sharing of the credit on these particular sets. Now something to remember here, this LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook, is that they have to be registered. They have to have accounts setup in these things already. We think that many students do already have professional accounts as well as personal accounts and so sharing these badges are just really a click away in any of these particular things they will be able to share it. "Mozilla Open Backpacks" is a little bit different. They have to do that through the account settings because there's not an automatic connector out there; but Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, these are your fairly universal things that are programmed in to be shared, but again always optional. Students can do everything or nothing with these badges. They can also put them into their own link for their badge into their own account. But I wanted to show you more specifically what the badge actually looks like, so if you click on the C-TECS Workplace Readiness Skills assessment badge, this is what they'll see.

(18:40) Now notice that it is coming directly off of our own website and students, I think this reassures students of who the issuer is. It's actually us, not Credly. We're working with Credly to be able to do this, but we are definitely issuing the badge, C-TECS that is. So they can see the title, the icon, who it's issued to, and when it's issued, so it's personalized there. They can see the issuer again and now they have links so if the student is looking at their own digital badge like I am looking at mine here, or if an employer is looking at it or a post-secondary educator is looking at it, they will always see this page, that the students have their own page. This is mine right here. So that's basically the

link they get and it's this professional sort of graphically well-represented thing that comes to them. They can click on any of these and unpack it even further, so when I talk about unpacking the details of the badge, this is really what they see. Not just a title and a date issue, but real data. You can even get the states who are using the digital badge or the Workplace Readiness Skills that is. Also the research behind it. You can see the skills list itself right here and links to the Workplace Readiness Skills introductory guide and the assessment itself, and the blueprint for the assessment. Again, here's the research. We have additional links below.

(20:26) Again, if there's any questions about this, please contact me. We have additional links below.